

# Alderman's Court

**Legal Authorization**

Alderman's Courts are authorized by the town charters of their respective municipalities.

**Legal Jurisdiction**

The jurisdiction of an Alderman's Court is limited to misdemeanors, traffic offenses, parking violations, and minor civil matters. The specific jurisdiction of each court varies with the town charter (which is approved by the General Assembly). Appeals are taken de novo to the Court of Common Pleas within 15 days of trial.

**Geographic Organization**

Alderman's Courts have jurisdiction only within their own town limits. There were six active Alderman's Courts at the end of 2003, two in New Castle County and four in Sussex County. When a town is without a court or an alderman for any period of time, its cases are transferred to the nearest Justice of the Peace Court.

**Aldermen**

The selection, number, tenure and qualifications of aldermen are determined by the towns themselves. Some require lawyers while others choose private citizens. A few aldermen serve full-time, while some are part-time.

<b>Caseload Summary Fiscal Year 2003 - Total Cases*</b>						
	Pending 6/30/2002	Filings	Dispositions	Pending 6/30/2003	Change In Pending	% Change In Pending
New Castle County						
Newark	5,188	10,671	10,361	5,498	+310	+6.0%
Newport	2,169	4,525	5,476	1,218	-951	-43.8%
Sussex County						
Bethany Beach	0	3,777	3,777	0	0	-----
Delmar**	262	147	409	0	-262	-100.0%
Dewey Beach	0	1,537	1,537	0	0	-----
Laurel	228	1,923	1,728	423	+195	+85.5%
Rehoboth Beach	12	529	442	99	+87	+725.0%
<b>State</b>	<b>7,859</b>	<b>23,109</b>	<b>23,730</b>	<b>7,238</b>	<b>-621</b>	<b>-7.9%</b>

<b>Caseload Summary Fiscal Year 2003 - Criminal Cases*</b>						
	Pending 6/30/2002	Filings	Dispositions	Pending 6/30/2003	Change In Pending	% Change In Pending
New Castle County						
Newark	388	2,057	2,088	357	-31	-8.0%
Newport	0	0	0	0	0	-----
Sussex County						
Bethany Beach	0	148	148	0	0	-----
Delmar**	64	71	135	0	-64	-100.0%
Dewey Beach	0	854	854	0	0	-----
Laurel	11	287	260	38	+27	+245.5%
Rehoboth Beach	5	125	120	10	+5	+100.0%
<b>State</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>3,542</b>	<b>3,605</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>-63</b>	<b>-13.5%</b>

<b>Caseload Summary Fiscal Year 2003 - Traffic Cases*</b>						
	Pending 6/30/2002	Filings	Dispositions	Pending 6/30/2003	Change In Pending	% Change In Pending
New Castle County						
Newark	4,800	8,614	8,273	5,141	+341	+7.1%
Newport	2,169	4,525	5,476	1,218	-951	-43.8%
Sussex County						
Bethany Beach	0	3,629	3,629	0	0	-----
Delmar**	198	76	274	0	-198	-100.0%
Dewey Beach	0	683	683	0	0	-----
Laurel	217	1,636	1,468	385	+168	+77.4%
Rehoboth Beach	7	404	322	89	+82	+1171.4%
<b>State</b>	<b>7,391</b>	<b>19,567</b>	<b>20,125</b>	<b>6,833</b>	<b>-558</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>

\*The unit of count for criminal and traffic cases is the charge. For example, a defendant with three charges disposed of is counted as three dispositions.

\*\*Delmar Alderman's Court discontinued services April 2003.

Source: Alderman's Courts; Administrative Office of the Courts.

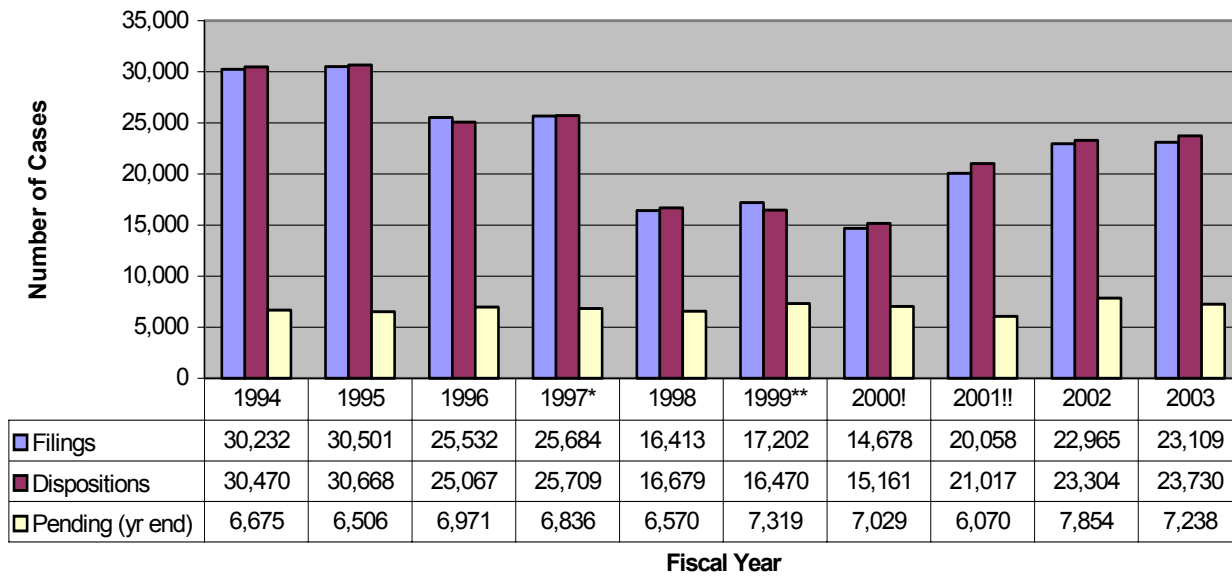
<b>Caseload Comparison - Fiscal Years 2002-2003 - Total Filings*</b>				
	2002	2003	Change	% Change
New Castle County				
Newark	10,413	10,671	+258	+2.5%
Newport	4,817	4,525	-292	-6.1%
Sussex County				
Bethany Beach	3,394	3,777	+383	+11.3%
Delmar**	447	147	-300	-67.1%
Dewey Beach	1,533	1,537	+4	+0.3%
Laurel	1,935	1,923	-12	-0.6%
Rehoboth Beach	426	529	+103	+24.2%
<b>State</b>	<b>22,965</b>	<b>23,109</b>	<b>+144</b>	<b>+0.6%</b>

<b>Caseload Comparison - Fiscal Years 2002-2003 - Total Dispositions*</b>				
	2002	2003	Change	% Change
New Castle County				
Newark	10,278	10,361	+83	+0.8%
Newport	5,390	5,476	+86	+1.6%
Sussex County				
Bethany Beach	3,394	3,777	+383	+11.3%
Delmar**	421	409	-12	-2.9%
Dewey Beach	1,533	1,537	+4	+0.3%
Laurel	1,821	1,728	-93	-5.1%
Rehoboth Beach	467	442	-25	-5.4%
<b>State</b>	<b>23,304</b>	<b>23,730</b>	<b>+426</b>	<b>+1.8%</b>

\*The unit of count for criminal and traffic cases is the charge. For example, a defendant with three charges disposed of is counted as three dispositions.

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Source: Alderman's Courts; Administrative Office of the Courts.

**Alderman Court - 10 Year Caseload Trend**

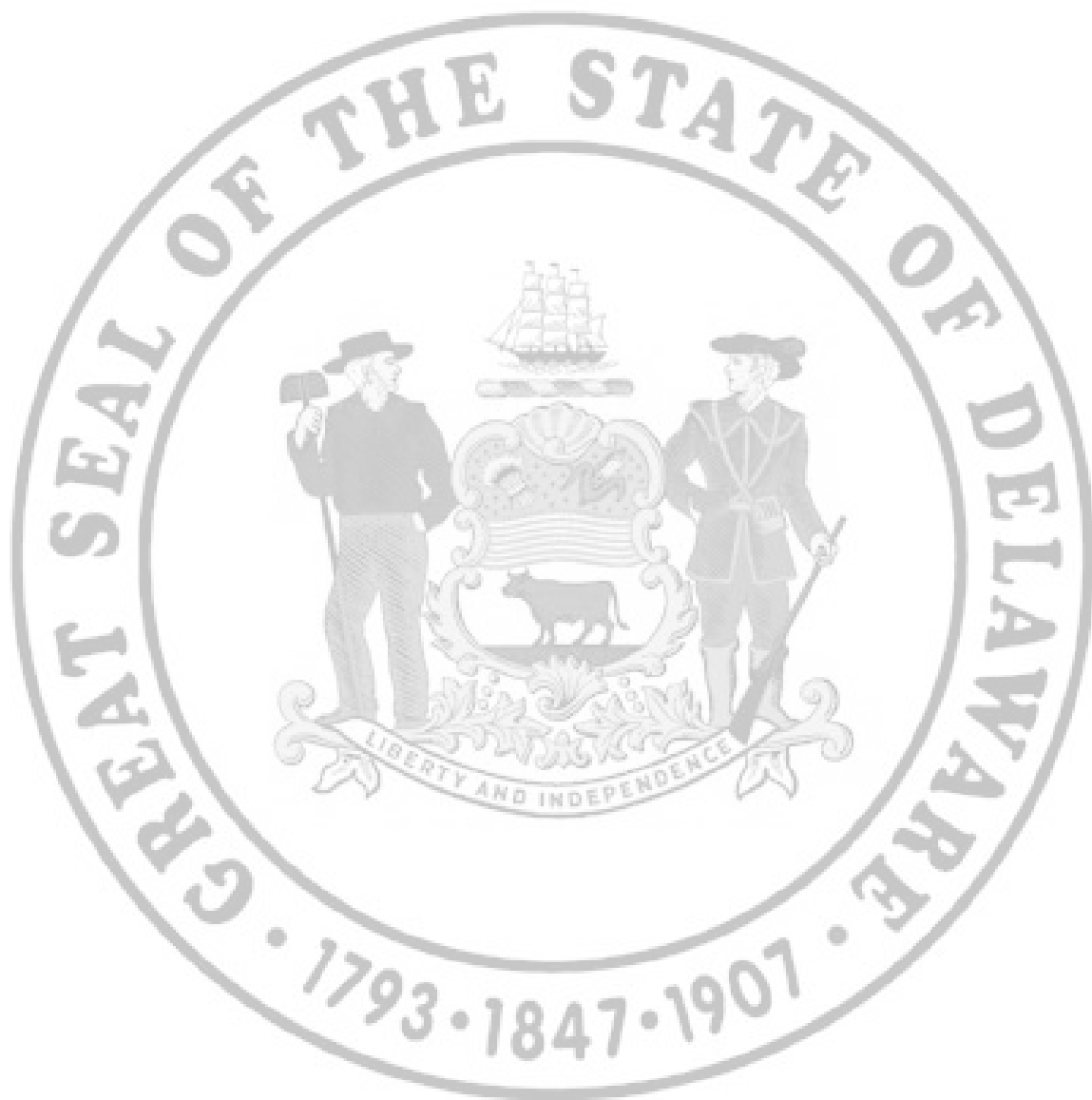
\*Filings, dispositions, and pending amended.

\*\*Filings and dispositions amended.

!Dispositions and pending at end of year amended.

!!Pending at end of year amended.

Source: Alderman's Courts; Administrative Office of the Courts.



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